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Photograph by Edward Mandinian

ALICIA MARKOVA

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, has heard some ovations in its time, but few can have been ore tumultuous than that which greeted Margot nteyn on her re-appearance on June 24th after a nth's absence during which she was dancing with land Petit's new company in Paris. The reception s an expression of our joy at seeing her again, pride at Paris had taken her to its heart, and a tribute to her ly magnificent performance in *The Sleeping Beauty*. She llowed this with a superbly danced Giselle and her st brilliant Odette-Odile to date. I wonder if any her ballerina has ever before danced the three major ssical roles within a period of only six days ? This ay very well be a record in itself. Fonteyn and Somes ve incorporated into the second act of *Giselle* the two autiful lifts introduced by Markova and Dolin—a licately administered lesson to those inflexible mem- rs of the audience who like to regard the Sadler's ells productions of the classical ballets as being the finitive editions which must only be altered from side the company. For the first time also Albrecht tered wearing the sword which reveals his rank to larion—an omission from the Wells' production therto which has always worried me. Incidentally, w good it is to know that at exactly the right age nteyn is reaching maturity as an artist.

No one present at the lecture on Mime given by adame Tamara Karsavina at the Rudolf Steiner Hall on ay 31st is ever likely to forget a single golden moment. r many it must have been their first glimpse of the eatest dancer-artist the Ballet has ever known and it s obvious that they, too, came under the spell of her agic. Never can the stereotyped gestures of the old assical mime have been given with more authority and ace though it was when she came to the Fokine ballets at we saw most of the quality which made her unique. m one of those lucky ones who saw her many times in *Spectre de la Rose* though never, alas, with Nijinsky, t most of the audience that night can never have seen r dance. I am sure that they all felt after her miming of the opening and closing scene that they had never before seen the Young Girl. Madame Karsavina made the interesting point which I have never heard alluded to before that only in *Carnaval* did Fokine make use of traditional mime and that he did so there to show the affinity with the Commedia dell'Arte. At the end, when Arnold Haskell as Chairman asked if there were any questions and expressed the hope that there would be a great many as he could go on sitting there all night, Frederick Ashton spoke for all of us when he asked for some more examples of Mime. Edward Mandinian took photographs of this event and a special montage of several of them appears on the next page.

All ballet critics, if they are honest, will admit that they are sometimes at a loss when required to write on dancing outside the usual field in which they at any rate believe they are knowledgeable. (Ask any ballet dancer his or her opinion of ballet critics as a race and the answer will be illuminating if chastening !) So if I express some slight disappointment over Katherine Dunham and her *Caribbean Rhapsody* and great disappointment over Carmen Amaya, I do so with all diffidence because I know no more about negro dances of the West Indies or Spanish *flamenco* than the person who has paid for the seat next to me. In retrospect I find I have taken away more from *A Caribbean Rhapsody*. It is always a pleasure to watch negroes dance—they do so with such an air of doing it as much for their own enjoyment as that of the audience. They know instinctively more about rhythm than any white person can ever hope to acquire and they never dance with less than their whole heart and soul. All this is apparent throughout *A Caribbean Rhapsody*. My cause for disappointment is perhaps my own fault ; I had expected something more than a streamlined Broadway adaptation of native rhythms, having possibly been led astray by advance publicity which stressed the anthropological roots of Miss Dunham's choreographic arrangements. I liked the quiet moments best—the little Rope Weavers number is quite exquisite, and there is no denying the excitement of L'Ag'ya in the ballet which reproduces the fighting dance of Martinique. This is performed with extraordinary timing and skill by Vanoye Aikens and Tommy Gomez. And such is the power of personality that when in the Survey of Ragtime which occupied the last part of the programme the singers announced *Ballin' the Jack*, the roof nearly flew off the Prince of Wales' Theatre, though it is pretty safe to say that no one had ever heard of this song until Danny Kaye came and sang it for us on those unforgettable Palladium nights.

Carmen Amaya and her company came to the Princes Theatre on June 15th after a sensational season in Paris, about which *Ballet Today's* correspondent writes on Page 9. In London it is another dancer, Luisillo,

dancing solo or with his partner Teresa, who has made the greatest impression on the public. Like all the best male Spanish dancers Luisillo (who is actually a Mexican) is small and wiry, and even in his fieriest moments retains a kind of nobility. Carmen Amaya is a dynamic young woman with wide mouth, smouldering eyes, a supple body and heel taps of incredible swiftness, who can manage a six foot train in a manner which is an art in itself. Twenty minutes of this at a night club would have kept me talking for days ; two and a half hours in a theatre had me gasping for air and longing for more of the wonderful guitarist, Paco Amaya, who provided almost the only quiet interlude. The gaudiness of costumes and setting were perhaps typically a gipsy's taste : the choice of music including Rimsky-Korsakoff and Ravel (*Bolero* of course) seemed not so much gipsy as just bad taste, and Miss Amaya had obviously travelled far from her origins when she finally appeared in a marvellously cut white suit which out-Marlene'd Dietrich. Surely this, and the several young women *en travestie*, must be very shocking to a Spaniard's ideal of womanhood. La Faraona, tall, robust and sinuous, was the Spanish earth itself in Gipsy Fiesta. I had no idea there was such a large Spanish colony in London ; they all seemed to be there, shouting *Olé* and what were evidently some pretty crisp wisecracks when Miss Amaya sang a song which, from the accompanying gestures, was strictly secular. They finished the evening as fresh as daisies, while all around me the less hardy English were drooping. I must add on behalf of Carmen Amaya that Sir Charles B. Cochran, who knows vastly more about these things than I do, has stated that she is the legitimate successor to Pastora Imperia, greatest of all *flamenco* dancers.

Only a few days later I was invited to watch the Spanish Folk Dancers who have been over here for the Welsh Festival and who gave a private performance at the Institute of Spain in Eaton Square. This was the real thing—folk dancing in its original simplicity and with the dignity which goes with it. It is the Andalusian dances which contain most of what we in England think of as typical Spanish movements. There is a strong Scottish flavour about some of the dances from other provinces and several of the costumes have plaid sashes and ribbons, while the accompanying instruments are bagpipes. A stage designer would need to be a genius to equal in imaginative beauty the intricate detail of some of the dresses.

Too late for review with the other Covent Garden events came the Markova-Dolin *Le Lac des Cygnes* on June 29th. Odette-Odile was by just a little the least successful of Markova's three classical roles though infinitely rewarding for all that. Her conception of both characters was what Hazlitt called "a complete thing," but the slowing down of certain movements and that idiosyncrasy of the bent knee which has become more marked with the years detracted somewhat from the effect as a whole, and though her last act was deeply pathetic the third did not have quite that edge of excitement which must come from the actual dancing. On the other hand Siegfried, to me at any rate, was Dolin's finest characterisation, marvellously commanding and princely from the first instant. Of his partnering there is nothing to say except that it maintained perfection throughout.

When Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo return to the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, this autumn for their first season there in six years, they will be celebrating their tenth anniversary. Plans include revivals of Massine's *Seventh Symphony* and *Rouge et Noir* which he will mount for them. Markova, Slavenska and Dolin are to be guest artists and Dolin will revive his *Pas de Quatre* for Danilova, Markova, Slavenska and Krassovska. In all probability an act of the old Russian ballet, *Paquita*, which has never been seen outside Russia, will provide Danilova with a new work.

Most welcome is the news that Danilova and Franklin have accepted an invitation to dance as guest artists with Sadler's Wells at Covent Garden next spring. This presumably means that we shall be seeing Danilova in (delicious thought) *Coppélia* and *La Boutique Fantasque*. There is some talk that their company will join them for a season later in the year but this is not definitely settled at the time of writing this paragraph. P. W. M.

MADAME KARSAVINA PHOTOGRAPHED DURING HER LECTURE ON MIME

Action photographs by Edward Mandinian

Action photograph by Edward Mandinian

ALICIA MARKOVA IN "GISELLE," ACT I. (DOLIN SECOND FROM RIGHT)

DOUBLE WELCOME AT COVENT GARDEN

By MARY CLARKE

MAY and June at Covent Garden were important and memory-stirring months. They brought a revival of *Job*, which has lived all through the history of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, and the guest appearances of Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin who did so much to put English Ballet on its feet and who still have so much to teach their successors.

It is always a pleasure to have *Job* in the repertoire and it has been too long absent. It has a very special appeal, a dignity, reverence and beautiful solemnity that is not approached by any other work in the ballet repertoire. It will never be a "popular" work but it is one that never fails in its effect. It requires perfect teamwork and one fine dancer and these it has always had. The present revival, produced for the first time at Covent Garden on May 24th, has been redecorated by John Piper, blessed with a full orchestra and slightly adapted to the larger stage. Piper's settings incorporate the debt from Blake into his own very personal vision with complete success. Most of his costumes are exactly right (those for the three Comforters are superb) although I found the costumes in the bacchanale and for the sons' wives at the end out of key. With Sir Adrian Boult to conduct, Vaughan Williams's wonderful score received justice for the first time and one was tempted to wish that *Job* could be performed just a few special times each year with Sir Adrian always available.

Ninette de Valois has made good use of her big stage in remounting her best stage work, and Michael Benthall's lighting is invaluable in imparting a rarefied atmosphere to the heavenly scenes. Performances have been excellent. The whole company dances with simplicity and reverence and now that there are enough boys to dance the Comforters as well as War, Pestilence and Famine these (always good) scenes gain

tremendously—although surely it is now possible to arrange things so that Job has the same sons restored to him that he loses in the beginning ? Rassine gives a beautiful performance as Elihu and Palma Nye is outstanding among the daughters of Job. Helpmann's Satan is all darting venom, speedy, controlled, exciting, but it was Dolin's reappearance in the role he created that gave us the real incarnation of Blake's Satan. He is physically better suited to the role than Helpmann and, even in repose, has an air of magnificence which the younger dancer lacks.

The important thing about a performance of *Giselle* is surely to remember that there are so many ways of being right. The partisan spirit which sours so many ballet achievements has created a myth that only one great Giselle is vouchsafed to each generation. But is it ? In the last few years in London alone Fonteyn, Chauviré, and Sally Gilmour have given interpretations which, though widely different, are all, within the bounds of the dancers' conceptions and their schooling, extremely fine. The fact that Markova now returns with her matured and final reading of the part to set the seal upon a period of richness with a performance that seems to me to contain the very spirit of *Giselle* does not necessarily detract from the other ballerinas. They all have their several excellences and most of us will be content to draw from each the qualities which we particularly admire and, by remembering and treasuring them, will in time create a mental picture of a Giselle whose perfections exceed the potentialities of any human dancer.

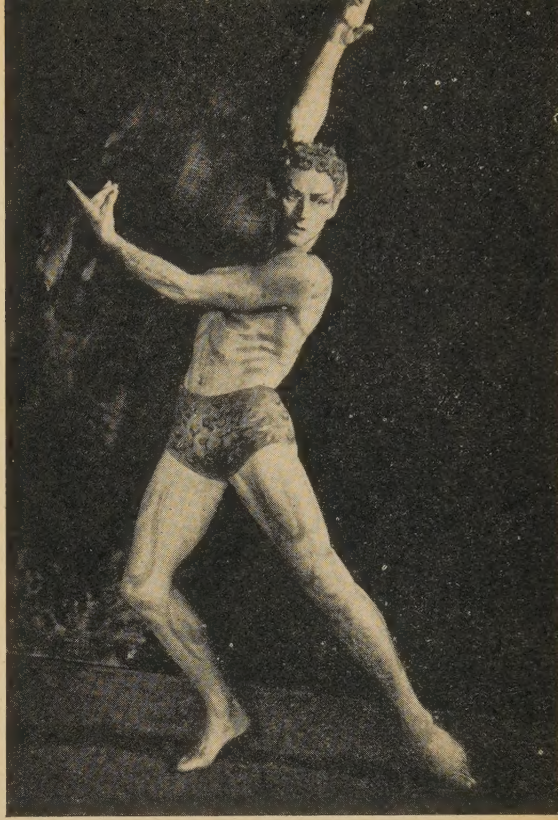
It is difficult to analyse exactly wherein the special magic of Markova's performance lies. Technically she is no longer a virtuoso—there is some loss of speed and elevation since we saw her last—although when it comes to an *echappé*, a *soubresaut* or a *petit rond de jambe en l'air* she is still supreme—but what she does do is completely a part of her whole interpretation. Her

ROBERT HELPMANN AS SATAN IN "JOB"

Photograph by Edward Mandinian

ction photograph by Edward Mandinian

ALICIA MARKOVA AND ANTON DOLIN IN "GISELLE," ACT 2



Photograph by Edward Mandinian

ANTON DOLIN AS SATAN IN "JOB"

emotional and dramatic reading of the part seems to me almost flawless, indeed she *is* Giselle, just as Gielgud, in 1944, was Hamlet. Her most individual qualities are, of course, her incomparable lightness and delicacy which give her first act pathetic fragility and her second intangibility. She makes less contrast between the two acts now than any other Giselle I have seen. In Act I she is tremulously happy but never completely at peace with her Albrecht so that one is prepared for the tragedy by her own nervous foreboding, and when in the second act she appears as a bloodless spirit it is still manifestly the same Giselle. This affinity and continuity between the two acts is probably the reason above all others why Markova now captures the spirit of the whole ballet.

Dolin's Albrecht, far more restrained than formerly, now manages to be the embodiment of a *danseur noble* in the great classical tradition and yet to infuse into the character an extraordinary warmth of humanity ; he reacts to situations exactly as an impulsive man would react. His mime is simple and clear and his dancing still remarkable. In short, his is an Albrecht worthy of Markova's Giselle.

The small emendations in the production which Markova and Dolin have instituted are all sympathetic and sometimes valuable. Dolin's first appearance in cloak and sword—which Wilfrid cautiously reminds him to remove—established his duplicity with remarkable clarity. I liked the way Giselle's veil is magically twitched away as the Queen of the Wilis summons her from the grave, and what sorrows are contained in her hopeless little nod of acquiescence as she is ordered to dance.

In the presence of two such great artists one is less inclined than usual to notice or carp about other performances. But I record with pleasure that the Queen of the Wilis is no longer thrust up from a yawning hole in the stage and the flying wilis have completely disappeared. Leslie Edwards is a sympathetic and therefore a good Hilarion but Gillian Lynne seems miscast as the Queen of the Wilis. She has a strong jump but neither her *bourrée* nor her balance is good. In the tiny role of Moyna, Rosemary Lindsay adds to the good impression she has made in several solos recently.

The Sleeping Beauty, which Markova and Dolin danced for the first time on June 14th must have driven home to everyone present how different is the approach of our own young dancers from these artists of another school. One never went to see Markova in order to witness a display of athleticism and her Aurora is naturally built on her beautiful stage presence, her

precise, almost fastidious, execution, and her wonderful aristocracy of bearing. She does not seek to build up any more "character" than Petipa put in but she is always completely in sympathy with the slow action of the ballet : at first she is quite simply happy ; the finger pricking has a fairy-tale poignancy ; as the vision of Aurora she melts into the air ; and in the last act she is so happy that her emotion floods right out into the audience. The last act, the final impression, is the important one for any Aurora and it is Markova's best. She has all the nobility in the world for the great *adagio* and her solo has the sugar-icing crispness yet delicacy that one associated with her Sugar Plum Fairy. It is not an ideal part for Markova—she is far more naturally Giselle than Aurora—and yet it is a great Aurora none the less.

Dolin's Prince, I hope, reminded everybody that it *is* possible to look royal on the stage without being wooden or plain snooty. His first stately entrance was so magnificent that one almost forgave the fact that he was palpably under-rehearsed in the hunting scene. His mime again is the essence of clarity (as too is Pamela May's as the Lilac Fairy) and in the last act he is an ideal partner and cavalier. I suspect that back in 1921 when he was appearing as a page in this same ballet he must have utilised much of his time in watching Vladimiroff as the Prince, and I hope our own young cavaliers will note the moral. The visits of great artists such as Markova and Dolin are of equal value to dancers and audience alike and it is to be hoped that their invitation will prove to be the beginning of a policy and not just an isolated pleasure. Danilova, Youskevitch, Chauviré could all teach us so much and the hallmark of the genuine ballet lover is always the desire to learn.

The action photograph by DUNCAN MELVIN *on the cover is of Margot Fonteyn and Roland Petit in "Les Demoiselles de la Nuit," at the Marigny Theatre, Paris.*

ALICIA MARKOVA AND ANTON DOLIN IN "THE SLEEPING BEAUTY," ACT THREE

Action photograph by Edward Maudinian

THE DANCE IN PARIS

By FERDINAND REYNA

BALLET in Paris this season has been mainly dominated by three events : the appearance of Rosella Hightower, star of Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo, by that of Carmen Amaya, the gipsy dancer, and by Margot Fonteyn appearing as star of Les Ballets de Paris of Roland Petit.

The art of Rosella Hightower is characterised by great inward simplicity ; she reaches the heights but remains within the bounds of classicism. Speaking of her one does not talk of technique for in itself technique is nothing if the dancer has not assimilated it to the point where it can be forgotten. Such is the case with Rosella Hightower, every one of whose movements flows with a perfect grace. She is the living proof of that supreme test of artistry, the total transfiguration of a being. Rosella Hightower is not a beauty, she is small, shy. In class she seems lost, almost insignificant amongst her companions : nothing distinguishes her from the rest of the *corps de ballet*. When you speak to her she seems astonished by your admiration. But the stage enlarges her, in a figurative sense. This, then, is her victory over so many other dancers whose talent is perhaps not less than hers, but *who know too well that they dance too well !* She proves the truth too often forgotten that a dancer's expression is not only in her face but in all her body.

In the first act of *Giselle* Rosella Hightower is not ultra-romantic but her emotion is "in tune," for the expression of her grief is restrained, reserved and chaste. In the second act, Hightower truly fills the stage with her presence.

She was born in Missouri and studied there with an old pupil of Cecchetti. Her first part, given her by Massine, was Papillon in *Carnaval*. Her second success was the valse in *Les Sylphides*, and finally the *pas de trois* from *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Thus her career began.

In one of our previous issues we spoke of the creations of Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo in Paris. Now we must mention the others, more recent, at Monte Carlo. The first, *Sentimental Colloquy*, seems to have nothing in

ROSELLA HIGHTOWER IN " LES BICHES "

Action photograph by G. B. L. Wilson

Action photograph by G. B. L. Wilson

ROSELLA HIGHTOWER AND ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY IN " THE BLACK SWAN " PAS DE DEUX

common with the famous poem by Verlaine. The music is by an American, Paul Bowles. The décor by Salvador Dali is, it is needless to say, strange and unexpected. Bicycles and a giant tortoise surmounted by a dressmaker's dummy cross the stage. The music is waggish, youthful, and designedly stripped of pretension and solemnity. *Sentimental Colloquy* is a frolic which may baffle the spectators, but the art of André Eglevsky and Rosella Hightower can do miracles, in this case a particularly difficult thing. Eglevsky's choreography is in the modern manner and holds its own amidst the Dali décor.

The Five Gifts, on a score by the Hungarian composer, Dohnanyi, and with a libretto by the choreographer, William Dollar, based on a Mark Twain story, is conceived in a different manner from *Sentimental Colloquy*. Though the choreography contains nothing very novel it is nevertheless extremely agreeable to watch. Well interpreted by the stars of the company, this work holds its place beside the classical masterpieces in the repertoire of this company.

At the Paris Opera a revival of *Petrouchka* by Serge Lifar and Nicolas Svereff has been presented under the supervision of Benois. Few today have seen the *Petrouchka* of Nijinsky and Karsavina. *Petrouchka*, like all choreographic works, has undergone inevitable changes the further it has grown away from the atmosphere and personal vision of the creator at the moment of its first performance. According to authoritative critics who saw the original production the present revival follows it closely : in fact it is as faithful as possible and the work retains all its enchantment. The casting—Michèle Bardin (the ballerina), Michel Renault (Petrouchka) and Marc Bozzoni (the Blackamoor) might cause argument. Efimoff as the Magician is an effective mime. Mlles Moreau and Bourgeois, *premières danseuses*, and Mlles Guillot, Mail and Gerodez as well as the entire *corps de ballet* are tried particularly high, for the revivals of these old works today have to stand comparison with the memories and legendary glories of Diaghilev days, which is hardly fair to them.

Divertissement is the title of a new work by Serge Lifar also at the Opera, based on *La Belle au Bois Dormant*. All the stars appear one after the other as well as the principal members of the *corps de ballet*. This trifle has rather the appearance of an examination piece although Lifar's choreography is ingenious and varied. At the rise of the curtain the Sleeping Beauty is seen asleep. The prince arrives, drawn thither by the good fairies, and awakens her with a kiss, after which the fairy stories are displayed before them. Princess Aurora is Mlle Chauviré in all her dazzling virtuosity,

d the Prince Charming is Monsieur Bozzoni. The *lagio* has remarkable charm and the variations and oda of the Blue Bird are very well danced by Christiane aussard and Michel Renault. Kalioujny with Mlles oreau and Bourgeois have a beautiful *pas de trois* hich they execute magnificently. All the *corps de llet* deserve mention. The décor by Bouchène delightful, the lively colours of the costumes blending d contrasting agreeably. Perfect presentation makes *ivertissement* a choice spectacle. The company at the pera is at present in extremely good form.

Carmen Amaya and her troupe came for a week to e Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. They stayed a onth. Not for years has Paris been shaken with such frenzy of movement. This is a troupe of real gipsies. armen Amaya, her three sisters, two brothers and arious cousins make up the company. Small, nervy, ery dark, Carmen Amaya danced before she was able o talk properly. She is, as they say in Paris, "a atural." Leaving prior to 1939 for South America, maya was seen by Toscanini in Buenos Aires. He was nthusiastic about her, as was Stokowski. It is thanks o them that Carmen Amaya was able to enter the nited States and accept an engagement with Hurok. maya is sometimes serious, sometimes playful. She improvises according to her moods and her performances therefore vary almost every night, making it difficult to analyse her art. Briefly, it is genuine *flamenco*, danced by a great artist, but quite instinctive and without any aiming at stylisation nor any attempt at "art." There is no affectation in the costumes or décor; movement suffices for this troupe who stamp and turn with a passion, a precision and an amazing clarity. One leaves the theatre as though tipsy from drinking too strong wine. We repeat that Paris has not for a long time had such a debauch of rhythm. One may say that Carmen Amaya and her gipsies have conquered Paris.

Les Ballets de Paris, the new company formed by Roland Petit, which had its first night at the Marigny Theatre on May 22nd, deceives us in part. It is all very well to publicise in advance a dazzling array of the great names of Paris as librettists, designers and famous dressmakers, but amongst all this is not the dance in danger of being forgotten ? The dancers engaged by Petit—Renée Jeanmaire, Colette Marchand, Serge Perrault, Vladimir Skouratoff, are stars of the first order. Maria Dalba, dancer from the Rome Opera House, who was a pupil of Romanoff and Guerra, is very light, fluid, and dances most agreeably.

ROSELLA HIGHTOWER AND ANDRÉ EGLEVSKY IN "GISELLE," ACT ONE

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

MARGOT FONTEYN AND GORDON HAMILTON IN "LES DEMOISELLES DE LA NUIT"

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

CARMEN AMAYA

One would mention particularly Margot Fonteyn, to whom the public has given a most sympathetic welcome and a well-deserved admiration. She interprets her role of the Cat in *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* with an acute intelligence ; her virtuosity, which is great, is only one aspect of her talent : the purity of her movements in which nothing is lost shows her not only as a dancer but as a personality, and a very important one. Her line, austere but not dry, testifies to her constant work to maintain the silhouette of a dancer which, while remaining classical is also in the spirit of our time.

The repertoire consists of four ballets. On the *Symphonic Studies* of Schumann, Boris Kniaseff has built a choreographic work consisting of a suite of numbers interpreting the twelve variations of the theme in which the imagination of the composer has given free rein to his fantasy. The *adage à trois* is most beautiful, the finale truly harmonious. Kniaseff does not do violence to our taste : his *enchainements* are clear, his groups form and dissolve smoothly.

Unfolded in three scenes, the scenario by Jean Anouilh of *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* relates to the apt music of Jean Françaix the story of a Cat metamorphosed into a young woman. Agathe, the Cat, in spite of her love for the young man who has married her, goes every night to join her cat friends on the roof tops and her husband, in trying to follow her, falls and is killed. Agathe shows herself faithful to him in death, for she dies with him. The *pas de deux* in the first scene (Petit-Fonteyn) is charming, but in general Petit's choreography is banal and lacks resource. The dĕcor by Léonor Fini is interesting and ingenious.

L'Allegro, to music by Ravel, in which Janine Charrat dances her own choreography with Colette Marchand and Maria Dalba, is pleasant enough. They are partnered by Skouratoff and Perrault. The costumes by Jacques Fath are very *haute couture*. His décor does not astonish in spite of its sumptuousness.

Que le Diable l'emporte is a collaboration between the painter, André Derain, and the composer, Manuel Rosenthal, who has wittily utilised popular airs of the 18th century. Satan takes at his word the dancing master who, at every mistake of his pupil, Jeanmaire, invokes the devil. But the devil is so charming that after their initial fright the other pupils want to follow him as well. Gordon Hamilton, who has made a sensation in the Anouilh ballet in the role of the Baron Cat, has the part of the dancing master, a very amusing and well thought out character study.

MASTER PRODUCER

By PAUL TASSOVIN

IN the theatre, production can make or mar. Such is its power that great artists may be made to look small, and small or mediocre artists appear almost great. By production I mean the careful supervising, apportioning, and blending of all those elements that contribute to a finished work of art.

The trouble with ballet these days is the absence of production. Most of the performances one sees look as if they had been thought up over-night, rehearsed on a lorry an hour before the curtain rose, and danced to the halting accompaniment of a hack orchestra playing from sight.

Loose production permits many evils. Too often one sees young artists, some of them most promising dancers, performing roles without a clue as to their dramatic interpretation; in fact without even an elementary knowledge of acting. Too often one has to look at *pas de deux* performed with technical precision, but devoid of any emotional content. Too often one has to endure *corps de ballets* that cavort like

marionettes. One observes many other abuses; liberties with *tempi*, bastard reproductions, and lighting of the variety hall standard.

Programmes frequently carry that much abused title "artistic director" when the performances in question appear to have been given under the direction of a plumber, or somebody much less efficient. I have always taken it for granted that artistic director was ballet's grand name for producer, but apparently I am mistaken. The so-called artistic directors of some present day companies seem to interest themselves in the librettos of ballets, in the décors, even in the choreography, and sometimes they may dabble half-heartedly in lighting effects, but there it ends. The result is that the poor dancers are entirely neglected.

Only recently I saw a company,—and it shall be nameless,—where a boy was permitted to dance the male role in *Les Sylphides* as though he were on stilts. A truly devastating spectacle. Many other frightful things happened too; yet the programme carried the names of an artistic director, and a *maître de ballet*. Obviously neither knew his business.

How long is this primitive state of affairs to be tolerated? When are dancers going to be introduced to the art of acting? And when will histrionics be taught in the ballet classroom? In London and New York technique appears to be the aim of every young dancer. Virtuosity is the pursuit to the exclusion of all else. Well, as far as I am concerned, they can keep their technique if they are going to throw it in my face like a dish of uncooked tripe. I would rather watch Jean Babilée walk across the stage, than see twenty-five would-be Eglevskys doing ninety-six *entrechats dix* on their heads.

No doubt many learned people will hasten to inform me that the choreographers take charge of the dancers, and produce them in their various roles as they create the ballets; but even assuming that the choreographer is a competent producer, and his dancers experienced artists who are able to interpret his intentions, it is a detrimental factor that their work together is seldom of a permanent nature. Quite often the choreographer has to go away to fulfil obligations with other companies, and his ballet is left to the mercy of a *maître de ballet*, or to the dancers themselves. It is well known that few choreographers remember their own ballets, so what hopes of authenticity when the ballet is a revival and the choreographer is no longer on this earth?

To return to my theme, I am not satisfied that choreographers are always capable of producing their own ballets. From what I have seen of modern choreographers many of them seem to want the steps made for them. However, since choreographers are very rare birds, and heaven knows how they ever learn to be choreographers except by "divine right" or by watching how others do it, it stands to reason that they may very likely be in need of a helping hand. Well then, considering these things, isn't it time the producer was called in?

At first glance it is perhaps a relief that Sadler's Wells Ballet carries no accredited artistic director. The Opera at Covent Garden has a production consultant, a staff producer, and a host of assistants, but the Ballet has to manage along with just one director, and a principal choreographer. They manage very well considering, but it is my belief that a producer-in-chief, if the right person could be found, would work wonders in maintaining a high and consistent artistic policy. I am not suggesting that the present policy is inartistic or inadequate, but from time to time one does observe certain limitations and lapses.

Leonide Massine is one of those choreographer-actor-dancers who by long experience and study commands the powers of a producer. His recent work *Mam'zelle Angot*, gay but slight, is a very finished product, and illustrates the kind of perfection I am advocating. It was a refreshing experience to see a new ballet in which the master's touch was at all times evident; in which every department was cared for; in which the music, the costumes, the décors, and the dancing were all admirably harmonised. The result, despite the frailness of plot, was a work of art.

But how shattering it was on the opening night to see the same choreographer's *La Boutique Fantasque* performed like a shambles. Such happenings evince my theory.

The personage I have in mind to direct and control the momentum of ballet needs to be above all a man of the theatre, not specialising in one department, but having a consummate taste and erudition, and a working knowledge of all departments. He must be a man steeped in the tradition of theatrical art, and he must be one man so that one policy may be maintained,—the policy of perfection. He must be a strong man to enforce his regime, an organiser to achieve it, and a business-man to succeed in it. All of which seems like crying for the moon.

In case I should be misunderstood, I would like to point out that almost without exception the great landmarks of theatrical history were made by talented individuals with absolute authority. Such super-men are not born every day, but only such as they can lift art and artists above the commonplace. It may be that we in this age are not to be blessed with a dictator of aesthetics, but I do think the time has come when a few discerning people should get together and form a Society for the Protection of Classics, and any company wishing to produce *Les Sylphides* or *Lac des Cygnes Act II* should be made to pass a test of authenticity, integrity, and artistry.

THE SLEEPING PRINCESS

THE International Ballet revival of Petipa's *La Belle au Bois Dormant* (Gaumont State Cinema, Kilburn, May 24th) which they follow Diaghilev in calling *The Sleeping Princess* though in other respects they claim fidelity to the original Maryinsky production, leads one to speculate anew as to whether this ballet would, in fact, have survived had it not been for the Diaghilev reconstruction in 1921. In all except the spectacular aspect it is inferior to *Le Lac des Cygnes*. The story is negligible and comes to an end with one act still to go, and though it is true that the story in itself can never be the principal interest since the peculiar merit of a ballet lies in the number of times one can watch it long after all the element of surprise has gone, it does seem to me that the ballet which has a story which holds one the first time is usually the one which gives most pleasure over the years. But one comes to *The Sleeping Princess* knowing the plot in advance, and so perfunctorily is it treated that it is difficult to feel the smallest concern. Given a good Odette-Odile, the dullest performance of *Le Lac des Cygnes* makes a rewarding evening. Aurora is not in the same class as a character so that *The Sleeping Princess* depends on its trimmings and, above all, on the quality of the dancing in the multitude of variations.

The present revival claims to be the most authentic representation of the original Maryinsky production yet seen in this country, and it does in point of fact more closely resemble the version originally arranged by Nicolai Sergueff for Sadler's Wells Ballet before the war than does the latter company's present production or that of Diaghilev in 1921. The *pas de quatre* for Diamond, Sapphire, Gold and Silver is back in the third act (at Covent Garden Florestan and his Sisters dance to their music), and so is the character *pas de deux* for Cinderella and Prince Fortune—a very boring passage. There would be a Hop-o'-my-thumb interlude but that regulations forbid the appearance of children on the stage after ten o'clock. In the last act, too, appear a number of additional characters from the Perrault fairy tales who are unidentifiable by English audiences ; after all, who in England knows the story of the Bluebird and Princess Florine ? The Bluebird dances the short version of his solo which it now appears is the authentic one; though shorn of half its glory one can only wonder why this made its reputation as the supreme test for the male classical dancer, and the coda for Aurora and the Prince is once again danced to the jaunty folk tune which Tchaikovsky, following Glinka and Dargoumijsky, incorporated into his music. I have never been able to understand why Diaghilev preferred the Sugar Plum Fairy to Aurora's variation, nor why he introduced the Porcelain Princesses, but his decision to scrap the coda and re-orchestrate it into the rollicking free-for-all of Nijinska's Three Ivans is a striking example of his taste, for the music is wildly unsuitable for the finale of a classical *pas de deux* and the dancers cannot help making it appear an undignified scramble.

There are fewer differences than one might expect in the actual choreography and some of these seem governed rather by the dancing talent available than any question of authenticity. If the conclusion of the fish dives in the last act *adagio* is really seen here as Petipa invented it, with the ballerina keeping one toe on the ground and the other leg at an unseemly angle above her head, then it is an extremely ugly invention and whoever altered it was perfectly right.

The conclusion of the Vision Scene by the playing of the music which Tchaikovsky entitled "Panorama" while the curtain remains up and transparencies are used to indicate the journey of the Prince and the Lilac Fairy to Aurora's palace is obviously the way to do it, and this act rightly ends with the kiss of awakening and the bestowal of Aurora's hand on the Prince. She is therefore able to awaken in the same dress in which she fell asleep, though I could not help wondering what had become of the four princes who carried her in. Perhaps, being perfect gentlemen, they managed to keep awake until they had politely closed her door behind them.

It is no good pretending that the Gaumont State Cinema is an ideal theatre for such a ballet as *The Sleeping Princess* which is far and away the largest touring production of any ballet ever to be seen in this country. The stage is disproportionately shallow for its width so that the scenery is never seen in proper perspective. This has the effect of dwarfing the dancers in the first act and making them appear too tall against what should plainly be towering pillars in the last. But the scenery altogether seems rather thinly painted and at the moment the proper balance of lighting has not been achieved ; doubtless this will gradually be rectified. Some of the costumes are magnificent in themselves but the colour schemes are not impressive.

I liked very much the introduction of two yokels playing fiddle and pipe for the farandole in the Hunting Scene. This gave the right bucolic atmosphere. What I quite unequivocally did not like was the Garland Dance to the famous Waltz. This was bad taste run riot and one of the things that causes one to view the famed Maryinsky period with such grave suspicions, though the appearance of the boys in it is unquestionably correct.

THE FAIRIES AND THEIR CAVALIERS IN THE PROLOGUE OF "THE SLEEPING PRINCESS"

Action photographs by Frank Sharman

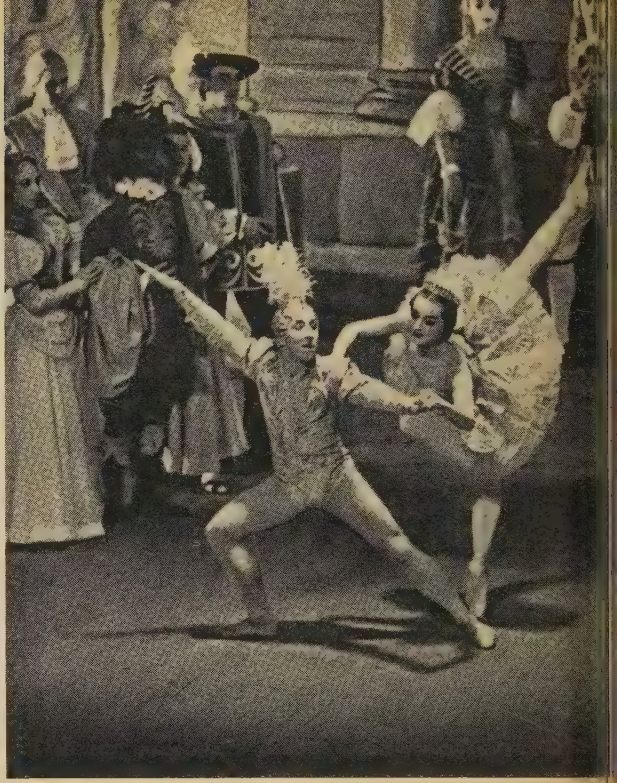
MONA INGLESBY AS AURORA IN ACT I

As I said at the beginning, *The Sleeping Princess* stands or falls on the merit of its dancing performances. I have never yet seen a production which did not bore me for long periods, and I would go so far as to say that if the whole of the dancing talent in this country could be called upon out of which to pick the best possible cast, the result would still fall short of a one hundred per cent. entertainment, and I might add that there are many people who will admit that the Diaghilev production had its *longueurs*.

Except for Aurora herself, little of the dancing in this revival is out of the rut, but Claudie Algeranova is the best Princess Florine for many a long day. What an extraordinarily good dancer she is! In the half variation left to him Michel de Lutry does not have much chance to show his prowess though I was disappointed in his inability to "beat." His costume wins my private prize for the ugliest ever seen on any ballet stage.

Mona Inglesby has some remarkable qualities as a dancer. She is exceptionally light, swift and aerial with strong, beautiful feet. She has still to find the radiance which will transform Aurora from a lay figure into a lovable, living creature, and her over-vigorous turning of *pirouettes* and her disconcerting habit of dropping her elbows at present mar a performance which has much to recommend it, but I have never seen her to better advantage.

P. W. M.



Action photograph by Frank Sharman

MICHEL DE LUTRY AND CLAUDIE ALGERANOVA IN "THE BLUE BIRD" PAS DE DEUX

MADELEINE GUIMARD

By B. BELLAMY GARDNER

IN 1748 was born the poet Despréaux. A poet, yes, but also a man who was to become the husband of the celebrated Madeleine Guimard—Guimard the Grand, as she has been called.

Madeleine was born in 1743 (the actual date is not known), and made her début at the Comédie Française when she was sixteen. In 1762 she achieved a triumph as Terpsichore in the ballet *Les Caractères de la Danse* and from that time onwards she scarcely looked back. Her greatest successes were in the ballets *La Chercheuse d'Esprit*, *Mirza* and *Le Premier Navigateur*. Indeed, almost the only occasion when she was definitely not good was at the time when she turned singer. It was in *Les Fêtes d'Hébé ou les Talents Lyriques* as one of the three Graces that she sang *and* danced, and she only attempted that because of her jealousy of Mlle Dervieux, a bad singer who happened to become a very good dancer. Appreciating that her voice was not as it might be, however, Madeleine re-appeared as a dancer shortly afterwards.

She was the idol of Paris for more than thirty years; she won her fame as a dancer and supplemented it by her personality and character. Never a beautiful lady, as such, she still contrived to be graceful; and this delightful manner captured for her many admirers beyond the bounds of balletomanes. Her grace was equalled by her remarkable kindness to less fortunate fellow-beings; for they had only to ask, and she would give. Not surprising, then, that she was never wealthy.

Besides the fees she received for her art, she was fortunate (financially) in becoming friendly with the Prince de Soubrise. Now the Prince de Soubrise was a notorious fellow in many ways, but it does not follow that Madeleine was a "lady of infamous character." True, after the commencement of their companionship, Madeleine was able to buy a large mansion in Pantin, in which was built a special theatre, and where were staged some exceedingly *risqué* comedies; yet these were for the benefit of her guests and not necessarily for

her personal delight—although there is no one who will not laugh if an amusing scene is well performed and leaves no ugly, roughened edge in the memory.

Not long after, Madeleine Guimard decided that a town house was a necessity ; and thus a house in the Chaussée d'Antin was also taken, in which another theatre was built to provide similar entertainment as at Pantin. This is one example of her rather expensive tastes, but it is as nothing when it is said that she held magnificent receptions to large numbers of people three times a week ; the first was for the aristocracy ; the second for the leading exponents of the arts ; and the third for the most select among the ranks of the dissipated. Her guests being the pick of their respective classes, it is only too natural that Madeleine should thoughtfully provide curtains for the darkened boxes within the theatre, so that the supposedly righteous of the feminine sex and the pure and upright among the male species might not be seen—even by the discreet eyes of other undoubtedly blameless members of the gathering. As an inkling of some of the entertainment which was reputed to be given, it was suggested (it is said) that Madeleine should produce a ballet, with herself in the leading role, on a classic subject which should more than equal *Les Fêtes d'Adam*—a ballet which had been performed privately by another some years previously. Actually this proposed ballet never came off as the Archbishop of Paris got wind of the idea and neatly nipped it in the bud.

Madeleine was extravagant, as has been shown, but her charity was equally well-known. A preacher referred to her as "Magdalen not yet repentant, but already charitable." Her kindness extended to begging the Prince de Soubrise to send her money on one occasion rather than jewellery—as was his wont—so that she might divide it among the poor. This was done, and she added considerably from her own resources to the Prince's handsome gift. At a later date she and other members of the ballet who received pensions from the Prince, discovered that the Prince de Gueméné (de Soubrise's son) had become bankrupt ; and accordingly they wrote to the Prince suggesting that their pensions be withdrawn and the money divided among the Prince de Gueméné's staff, so that they might live in peace and comparative comfort.

Extravagance and charity would be impossible without money ; and even though Madeleine was well supported by various wealthy admirers she was not without business instincts on her own account. She related an amusing anecdote of a case which occurred in London. It appears that the opera house where she was to have played caught fire, and the impresarios who had booked her endeavoured to break her contract (in which she was offered 650 guineas for the season) on this account. However, Covent Garden was placed at her disposal and after some lengthy consultations between herself, her solicitors and the impresarios Gallini and Ravelli, Madeleine won hands down, making Ravelli "look green" and Gallini "stupefied." Incidentally it is of note that the London engagement was most successful.

Times were getting hard for Madeleine ; the relinquishment of the Prince's pensions and those of other notabilities forced her to take drastic measures to keep up her expensive tastes. Her town house was sold by lottery, fetching 300,000 livres. Not long afterwards she retired, and married Despréaux whom she had known for many years.

Gradually her resources dwindled, and although Despréaux was able to take up various official positions in the artistic world they both found it very difficult financially. Their married life was a delight, but they were both too old to weather the conditions of a France just racked by Revolution and internal chaos. Madeleine died on May 4th, 1816 ; Jean, her husband, followed on March 26th, 1820.

Madeleine, who had been known to so many for her extravagance, her charity, and her charm in dancing, passed on almost unnoticed by her public. Madeleine had been gay ; Madeleine had been grand.

A Letter

The Editor,
Ballet Today.
Dear Madam,

I think it is time that critics and balletomanes alike abandoned the habit of comparing the ballet of the Diaghilev era with present day ballet. Such comparisons cause bad feeling and are worthless, or nearly so, for want of a common criterion. The balletgoer of the 1920's saw ballet with all the enthusiasm of youth and novelty, he is more staid and critical when he sees ballet today. The modern balletomane has no means of just comparison but he has youthful enthusiasm for what he sees although ballet is no longer a novelty.

If the "young" audience would spend some time in learning more than the names of the dancers of the earlier period to whom they are indebted for their pleasure today; and the "old" audience would remember that they were far more impressionable when they watched Karsavina than they are when they see Fonteyn, a better basis of understanding could be reached between the admirers of the two eras. It is time it was realised that ballet, unlike the recorded arts of music, painting, etc., cannot be fairly judged save in the period in which it belongs.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT DRURY.

NEWS FROM NEW YORK

By MURRAY N. FRIEDMAN

AFTER an absence of two years, Ballet Theatre returned to the Metropolitan Opera House on April 4th for its spring season. A loyal, if somewhat noisy, audience turned out to welcome the company back, and was rewarded with a varied programme, admirably performed.

As it developed, the audience was probably the largest of the season, for night after night there were large patches of empty seats visible. This was due partly, no doubt, to the absence of ballerina Nora Kaye, who was hospitalised just before opening night and was away until the final performances of the engagement. The effect, on some nights, of a half-filled auditorium obviously told on the dancers. But more about that later.

The première opened with George Balanchine's *Theme and Variations*. Set to the music of the Theme and Variations from Tchaikovsky's Suite No. 3 for Orchestra, it is yet another example of Balanchine's brilliant work in the sphere of pure dance. It is rigidly classic in conception, yet it was probably the most exciting thing done all season. There is scarcely a ballet in the repertoire to match it as a showpiece for the virtuosity of the ballerina and the *premier danseur*, nor one that makes such challenging demands on their techniques. Alicia Alonso and Igor Youskevitch were equal to the challenge, Miss Alonso being especially impressive.

ANNA CHESELKA OF BALLET THEATRE
Photograph by Marthe Krueger, N.Y.

Agness de Mille's *Tally Ho !* was next on the programme. As London audiences know, it is a light, witty work, unpretentious but quite charming. It is my own favourite among the de Mille ballets in the Ballet Theatre repertoire. Norma Vance, Muriel Bentley, Lucia Chase, Melissa Hayden, John Kriza and Dmitri Romanoff did well by the choreographer. No opening night would be complete without an Antony Tudor ballet. This time Mr. Tudor was represented by *Jardin aux Lilas*. Miss Kaye's illness made some changes necessary, and Alicia Alonso danced the role that is associated with the former. Hugh Laing, Mary Burr and Antony Tudor assumed the other principal roles. I am not carping at a competent performance, but I could not help feeling that the Ballet Rambert, with more limited facilities and a production much less elaborate, captures the spirit of this work a great deal better.

The concluding opus was Tudor's *Gala Performance*. Some shifting was again necessary. Muriel Bentley replaced Nora Kaye as the Russian ballerina, and Diana Adams substituted for Alicia Alonso, who had danced in the previous ballet, as the Italian ballerina. (Nana Gollner, who was recruited hurriedly as special ballerina, danced this part later in the season). Shellie Farrell was the French *étoile*. Miss Bentley has an original comic talent ; still I think that the whole ballet has been allowed to deteriorate. Here, again, a flying visit by Madame Rambert might serve to remind us of how this work should be presented.

Let us pass quickly over a space of ten days. Apart from John Kriza's splendid creation of the title part in the revival of Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*, two topics were being discussed in ballet circles : namely, the poor attendances and whether the new ballets would remedy it. So it was with some anticipation that we awaited Antony Tudor's first new ballet in three years. When it finally arrived, *Shadow of the Wind* was, to put it briefly, a disappointment.

Shadow of the Wind is an hour-long ballet, based on six poems of Li Po. The music, *Das Lied von der Erde*, the song-cycle *Song of the Earth*, is by Gustav Mahler. Despite magnificent scenery and costumes by the famed stage designer, Jo Meilziner, an hour is simply too long a time to sit through the slow-moving, frequently confused choreography.

Let us analyse the situation. First of all, no one

ALICIA ALONSO, PETER GLADKE AND MURIEL BENTLEY IN "FALL RIVER LEGEND"

connected with the ballet need feel ashamed. This was no crass commercial venture. Miss Chase and Mr. Tudor could not have hoped for a mass audience for this, their most expensive production in years. Nor could they have planned on it as a touring attraction. It is just too big, too expensive to take on the road. Therefore it must have been meant as a purely artistic undertaking, a distinguished contribution to Dance. I am all the more surprised, then, that it was brought so hastily before the public. A work like this called for more time, much more time, for rehearsal, for co-ordination, and possibly for Tudor to re-evaluate his ideas in the light of actual stage conditions. It is a pity to do these things with the public as confused guinea pigs. There are wonderful bits which illuminate this unconventional ballet, but unless I am very much mistaken, or unless a great deal of labour is put into it before next season, we shall not be seeing much of *Shadow of the Wind*.

The divisions of the ballet are, (I) "Six Idlers in the Valley," featuring Igor Youskevitch, with Hugh Laing and Dmitri Romanoff, (II) "The Abandoned Wife," with Alicia Alonso, and Mary Burr and John Kriza, (III) "My Lord Summons Me," with Crandall Diehl and Ruth Ann Koesun, (IV) "The Lotus Gatherers," which presented Diana Adams, (V) "Conversation with Winepot and Bird," featuring Hugh Laing, and (VI) "Poetry of the Guitar," presenting Nana Gollner, with Hugh Laing and Dmitri Romanoff.

The most interesting sections were "The Abandoned Wife" and, above all, "Poetry of the Guitar," in which Nana Gollner gave the best performance of the evening. For the most part, however, the dancers gave little indication that they knew what was expected of them, or where they were going, which is devastating in a Tudor ballet.

Much better publicised than *Shadow of the Wind* and somewhat better received, was a large new ballet by Agnes de Mille, *Fall River Legend*. Inspired by the famous trial at Fall River, Massachusetts, in the '90's when Lizzie Borden was acquitted of the axe-slaying of her parents, the ballet almost out-psychologises Mr. Tudor.

The curtain rises on one of Oliver Smith's excellent settings to disclose Lizzie Borden (the Accused) standing before the gallows as she listens to the charge against her. We go through the curtain of memory with Lizzie, as her past races across her mind. We see her happy girlhood, her loving father, the tenderness of her mother ; then the death of her mother and the arrival of her malevolent stepmother ; the denial of parental affection, the petty persecutions ; her opportunity for love and release in the person of the pastor thwarted by her parents ; the accumulation of frustration until violence is apparently the only escape. The journey across time concludes its cycle with a return to the opening scene.

Fall River Legend was mounted by Miss de Mille on her own cast while Ballet Theatre was on tour. The chief

role was clearly meant for Nora Kaye who, even under normal circumstances, would have had scant enough time to rehearse it. When Miss Kaye was hospitalised, Alicia Alonso had to learn the part in little over a week of strenuous rehearsals, and all the while she was giving nightly performances in other ballets. For her performance in a role that was custom-tailored for another ballerina, Miss Alonso deserves high praise. She has not Miss Kaye's dramatic intensity, but she gave notice of gifts in that direction that would be worth cultivating. Dancing as the Accused, however, she was unable to dominate the action as the role demanded, namely, to such an extent that her impress would be felt even when she was off-stage.

Muriel Bentley deserves some special award for her performance as the Stepmother. The ballet is nothing if not melodramatic, and Miss Bentley exuded such dark malevolence that any jury would have declared her murder justifiable homicide. This was one character that really came to life. John Kriza was appealing and convincing as the young Pastor, Diana Adams was very charming as Lizzie's real mother, Ruth Ann Koesun as the Accused as a Child, Peter Gladke as the Father, and Crandall Diehl as the Speaker for the Jury, all did nobly by Miss de Mille.

In spite, then, of some good individual performances, of an appropriate score by Morton Gould, and of some very pretty costumes by Miles White, *Fall River Legend* was a letdown to me. It lacks pace for one thing, and cohesion for another. Its forty-five minutes' running time seemed longer, and although much more elaborate than her earlier efforts, it marked no creative advance in Miss de Mille's work. Indeed, it was simply a large conglomeration of many things she had already done, particularly in musical comedy. Even when Miss Kaye returned at the end of the season, all one could say was that it was nice to have another vehicle that would bring her before us. It is only fair to say, however, that the audiences seemed to like it even if they did not always understand it.

To sum up, the season was only fair artistically and less than that financially. New ballets are needed to draw the public to the "Met.", but evidently those presented in the eason just past were not the ones. The realities of economics are making themselves felt more insistently. To fill the hall to overflowing at "Met." prices, as in days of recent memory, will require more than merely competent performances. It will require a thorough overhauling. The company has a good basic repertoire, leading dancers of the first magnitude in Kaye, Alonso and Youskevitch, and has developed some very promising newcomers. In this connection, Anna Cheselka, who is being brought along slowly, is surely marked for stardom. What is so discouraging is the unevenness of everything. A ballet may offer five superb minutes followed by five that make one gnash one's teeth. The *corps de ballet* may have one dancer with whom any choreographer would feel secure side by side with another who seems to have been engaged sight unseen.

Standards of excellence must not be allowed to deteriorate. Not so very long ago Ballet Theatre compared favourably with the best companies of the world. It could return to that position.

Ballet Society offered a surprise at the end of April. In addition to its fifth subscription programme it presented four open performances for the general public, all at the New York City Centre. The response was promising, and although the details have yet to be worked out in final form, it now appears that the company will be named the official ballet adjunct of the New York Centre Opera Company in the latter's ten weeks' opera season in New York next fall. Twice a week, or twenty times in all, it will present an entire evening of ballet. Some interesting competition to our two major companies is foretold. Even though many of the *corps de ballet* personnel are students, George Balanchine, the artistic director of Ballet Society, has always managed to extract their full capacities and has not permitted the principals to do less than their best.

The ballets on the all-Balanchine subscription on

MARIA TALLCHIEF

April 28th, however, were not equally interesting.

The programme opened with *Reynard* (*The Fox*), a ballet-burlesque for singers and dancers that was created in 1916. Book and music were by Igor Stravinsky, the English text was credited to Harvey Officer, and Esteban Frances was responsible for the scenery and costumes. Set for four male dancers, with four singers in the orchestra pit, the cast consisted of Todd Bolender as the Fox, Francisco Moncion as the Rooster, Herbert Bliss, the Cat, and John Taras, the Ram. A pleasant enough diversion and interesting for the light it throws on the choreographer's early efforts, it does not alter my antipathy to animals on stage.

This was followed by *Elegie*, described as a choreographic poem by Balanchine to music by Stravinsky. Featuring a violist and two female dancers on a small scenery-less stage, nothing much happens, and the curtain comes down without our having been able to discern just what Mr. Balanchine had on his mind. Tanaquil Le Clercq and Pat McBride were the dancers.

The news of the evening was the world première *Orpheus*, a ballet in three scenes, choreography by Balanchine, scenery and costumes by Isamu Noguchi, and music by Stravinsky. Mr. Stravinsky conducted the orchestra for the occasion. This is an imaginative treatment of the Orpheus legend, conceived with sensitivity. The direction was first-rate, the groups and soloists getting the most out of the situations. Nicolas Magellanes danced Orpheus and Maria Tallchief was Eurydice. The other principals were Francisco Moncion as the Dark Angel, Herbert Bliss as Apollo, Edward Bigelow as Pluto and Job Sanders as the Satyr. The remainder of a rather large *corps* were cast as Bacchantes, Furies, Lost Souls, Nature Spirits and Friends to Orpheus. The lighting was beautifully handled throughout.

Maria Tallchief took another step forward in her rise to ballerina eminence in the Mozart *Symphonie Concertante in E Flat* (K.364). Another of the Balanchine classical masterpieces, this time with scenery and costumes by James Stewart Morcom, it is so full of fascinating inventions that one never tires of it. The three movements are marked Allegro Maestoso, Andante, and Presto. Miss Tallchief executes to complete satisfaction the demands of the ballet. Tanaquil Le Clercq continues to fulfil her promise. Todd Bolender was the supporting male lead.

THE NEW MASSINE BALLET

WHAT possible connection has music by the first of the great classical symphonists with a ballet about goings on in the Insect Kingdom? The answer can only be "None whatever," and that is the root of the trouble with *The Clock Symphony* which had its first performance at Covent Garden on June 25th. One feels that Massine has handicapped himself by being bound to the inflexible movement form of the symphony while telling a continuous story of the utmost triviality.

The plot is a simple one; a Princess is wooed by three suitors each of whom brings her a gift. She chooses a poor young clock maker whose gift is an elaborate clock (whose "action" with ornamental figures occupies the second movement of the symphony which, as all the world knows, gets its title from the unchanging "tick-tock" tempo of this particular movement). The other two suitors damage the clock out of spite but are discovered, the clock maker quickly sets it to rights and all ends happily. This is danced out with a fussiness which never lets up for an instant, and Massine comes near being defeated by the music towards the conclusion where there is not enough left properly to bring out the idea of the clock being put out of action and working in reverse.

There is no explanation as to why every character except the clock maker is some kind of insect and his part is not developed nearly as much as Alexander Grant's talents would allow, though he dances splendidly and looks very well indeed. When Moira Shearer as the Princess has a chance of dancing she does it exquisitely but most of the time she has to be content with sitting about looking beautiful which she has less trouble than most people in doing. The two Insect Suitors (specimens unknown) are neatly done by Harold Turner and Donald Britton who have a nicely contrived exit riding on the backs of their pages which is one of the best things in the ballet.

Of course there are some other very good moments, perhaps the best of all being the movements for the pair of yellow legs which make the pendulum. Anne Heaton also seizes her chance of being effective as the Wife of the Mandarin.

Bérard's décor is charming in a glossy magazine manner, and though the set is reminiscent of some of his earlier work it is not a patch on his *Symphonie Fantastique* or *Cotillon*. The white vestments for the Clock figures which make them look like porcelain are his happiest inventions.

Altogether *The Clock Symphony* cannot be hailed with any great enthusiasm. It passes away half an hour or so pleasantly enough but leaves nothing to remember when it is over. The entire company serve the choreographer most loyally. P. W. M.

BALLET IN BRATISLAVA

By MARY STANFORD

THE National Theatre in this little Czechoslovakian city runs three lines—Drama, Opera and Ballet. Until fairly recently Ballet came a completely unhonoured third. Now, thanks to the enterprise and determination of the *maître de ballet*, Rudolf Macharowsky, and two or three other true idealists, the public is being given productions of a type undreamed of here ; excellent leading dancers have been brought in and endless difficulties, such as getting orchestral materials nowadays, etc., fought with and overcome. The result is that the whole public attitude towards ballet is fast changing, and interest in the Dance as an art in itself is growing daily.

The Ballet Company dances in the operas here as well, and this has led to some very pleasing performances, especially the dances in the evergreen *Bartered Bride*, a particularly charming introduction to the first act of *Don Quixote* and an excellent ballet in the last act of *Carmen* ; also the dances, to intoxicating rhythms, in a modern Jugoslavian opera *Kostana* by Petar Konjovic.

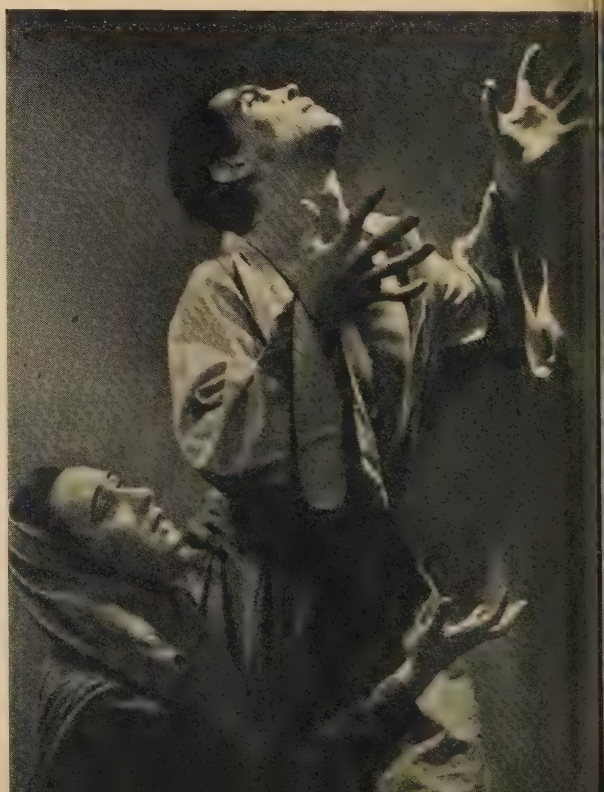
The most striking performance by the company within an opera, however, has been *Allegorical Picture : Way of the Cross*, which comes as an interlude between two scenes in the same *Kostana*. The theme of the opera deals with the oppressed lives of the gipsy people. Macharowsky, as choreographer, has generalised this idea. It is all extremely short and simple—the figure of a blind man, bathed in light, moves slowly through the crowd of stricken people. Yet the beauty of the grouping, the sincerity of the inspiration and the balance struck between symbolism and terrible realism make it quite unforgettable to anyone with "eyes to see." The way in which every member of the company caught the spirit and the quality of their work in it (and they have never done anything in that style before) are a great tribute to the originator of what is, in its way, a little masterpiece.

It is interesting to watch the progress of individual dancers here. The leading classical pair reach a most creditable standard. Eliška Slancová has real technical ability, and Miroslav Kura is in a class by himself in this country. One nineteen-year-old, Katarina Graccrova, is truly promising. Her classical work is beautifully controlled and precise, but in addition she has a real touch of that "grand manner" so especially sought for by all who have valued it since the time of the "goddesses of yesterday." Given normal conditions and opportunities, it is most probable that more will be heard of this young dancer further afield.

May 6th brought a full ballet *première*. Macharowsky presented *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Bolero* (in which Dagmar Zedecka (a graceful and charming dancer whose hands are a special joy) scored a great personal success, and the long-awaited *Petrouchka*. This last ambitious production crowned a resplendently successful evening, and for the care, thought and energy spent in trying to get the scenery, costumes, etc. as near as possible to the originals one's admiration knows no bounds.

In general here the credit due to Macharowsky and the genuine helpers is not only for what has been achieved but also for what has been aimed at, i.e. to make the public "ballet conscious" along the right lines. When one sees the reception of such productions and realises that the audiences are now no longer merely carried away by colour and rhythm, but are becoming seriously appreciative and conscious that they are getting productions in a different class from anything known in Ballet here before, then one feels that the time has come when enterprise and idealism can say not only "something attempted," but "something already done !"

"WAY OF THE CROSS"



SOVIET FOLK DANCE ENSEMBLE

By ELENA ROSLAVLEVA

SOME fourteen years ago an unusual theatre was formed in Moscow with the idea of assembling amateur talent from all parts of the country. It was the Theatre of Folk Art. Dozens of amateur groups arrived from all parts of the country to demonstrate their skill in dancing, singing or playing some national instrument. The groups brought ready "numbers" but all these disjointed items needed an experienced régisseur to make them into an attractive theatre spectacle.

Igor Moiseyev, choreographer of the Bolshoi Theatre, known already for his original treatment of movement in *Three Fat Men*, *Salambo* and an earlier work, *Football Player*, was invited to supervise the general arrangement of Folk Art demonstrations. Whilst proving extremely valuable to the new undertaking, Moiseyev who, as choreographer, was always interested in character rather than classic dance, absorbed a lot, and drank eagerly from the ever-fresh well of folk dance.

Further progress of national dance in the Soviet Union followed with the fabulous ten-day festivals of National Art—Georgian, Ukranian, Uzbeck, Kazkhstan, Kirguiz. They revealed immeasurable riches, attracting attention to many national dances unknown to the public. It was time to assemble these riches in one body, to accumulate their experience and improve upon it, creating new artistic values on the basis of the original dance idiom.

In 1937 the Arts Committee of the U.S.S.R. ruled the founding of a Folk Dance Ensemble. Igor Moiseyev became its natural leader. On February 10th, 1937, the company met for the first time. On October 17th of the same year the Folk Dance Ensemble of the U.S.S.R. had its first concert at the White Marble Hall of Columns. In those few months Moiseyev had to do a colossal, almost impossible work. The first group was composed of about thirty-five dancers. Sixty per cent. of them consisted of amateurs, only recently turners, mechanics, office clerks. However well they danced it was not a performance of a finished artistry and definite pattern. Ten per cent. only were real professionals—that is, graduates of either the Bolshoi Theatre or some other ballet school. But these people had another defect—they were considerably spoilt by a certain artificial quality in their dancing. The third group had another peculiar feature—it consisted of so-called "national dancers," i.e. men and women performing excellently the one or several dances of their own nationality, but absolutely helpless when asked to learn some other dance.

Moiseyev was faced by the problem of raising the level of his amateurs till they became real artists, while ballet dancers had to be taught how to dance folk dances in a perfectly natural, yet highly professional manner. In his very first programme, which had a tremendous success, Moiseyev demonstrated his principles as choreographer. He did not religiously adhere to the stereotyped combination of steps in the given folk dance. He developed and re-created it, bringing some elements into prominence, delicately shadowing others, merging two dances into one, forming an original pattern which often served to conceal the primitivism of the few basic steps usually constituting a national dance.

Moiseyev's first programme included Russian, Ukranian, Georgian, Bielorussian, Armenian, Kazakhstan, Azerbeijan and Moldavian dances. The first number was the Bielorussian dance *Liavonikha*, received with tremendous success and since then never leaving the programmes of the Ensemble. In its first year the Ensemble was given a task of learning folk dances of the eleven republics then forming the Soviet Union. In 1939 it added a special programme of Latvian, Lithuanian and Esthonian dances, choreographed by

IGOR MOISEYEV, PEOPLE'S ARTIST OF THE U.S.S.R.

"BULBA," (POTATO), A BIELORUSSIAN DANCE

Beatrice Wigner, Maria Baronaite and Anna Raudkats respectively under Moiseyev's supervision.

By 1941 the Ensemble was a recognised, highly professional company of about seventy dancers. (The company now numbers ninety-five dancers). While it was and still is called an "Ensemble" it is a large and well organised theatre with an excellent forty-five-piece orchestra of its own including many national instruments.

In 1941, shortly before the Germans invaded Russia, the Ensemble was given its own premises in the form of an entire floor of the beautiful building holding the excellent Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, where the Ensemble performs when it is in Moscow. It has a large Rehearsal Hall and many auxiliary rooms.

The first half of the war was spent by the Ensemble in the east—the Urals, Siberia, the Far East—where it danced for the sailors of the Pacific Fleet, and in Buriat-Mongolia. It returned to Moscow in 1943, and made numerous trips to liberated areas. In 1945 Moiseyev chorcographed a *Slav Suite* of twenty-six dances in which almost a hundred dancers —the entire company— took part together with the special orchestra. When the war was over, the Ensemble formed its own school (five-year course) and returned to a busy, creative life. Its workshops are constantly turning out those wonderful, impeccably fresh and artistically designed costumes, always keeping close to their ethnographic originals but never departing from the realm of art.

Igor Moiseyev sees that his mature, recognised, laurel-bedecked company never ceases working, and this constant progress, this constant search for new movements and new patterns explains why the level of performance is so hign. Everything is done with a seeming abandon, natural ease, "free breathing," but it is that nonchalance which comes only after a very high technical skill has been reached. We are facing a theatre—not an exhibition of dances of various peoples. What they are doing is professional. It is done with an estimate of the influence on the spectators. Humour and acting are introduced into the various folk dances where it is found necessary.

Bolshoi and Kirov Theatre character dancers also dance with wonderful *brio* and technical skill, but ballet character dances, particularly those choreographed by old masters, necessarily have an artificial hue and a certain reserve engendered by the classical school. There is also a difference in approach ; while every effort is made by the Ensemble to create a scenic effect, Moiseyev's compositions do not depart from their original folk source. This is very well seen in comparing a Petipa Mazurka from *Swan Lake* or *Paquita* with Moiseyev's Mazurka from the *Slav Suite*. The first was obviously copied from a society mazurka danced by greying *pans* and white-gloved *panenkas*. The mazurka steps are excellently danced both with technical prowess and *brio*, but the dance is very

artificial, it has travelled too far from its original source. Moiseyev's Polish dances are done in authentic peasant costumes, brightly coloured, adorned with ribbons. *Troiak* is a solemn dance of Southern Silesia used for starting a Sunday promenade. Four village musicians dressed in picturesque long coats open the procession. Then dancers appear in groups of three (hence *troiak*) each group formed of two young men with flowers pinned to their hats and bright shawls on their necks, and a girl. The dance is started in a serious manner always "preserving appearance." New couples fill the stage and *krakoviak* is started, real *krakoviak* and not the one of ballet, and lastly comes a breathtaking, brilliant mazurka.

Moiseyev dancers possess a very high professional quality which, as in ballet, undergoes individual changes in each dancer, producing additional effect. But besides this, they have another quality which is very difficult to put into words. It is a sparkle of natural, unrestrained movement.

Soviet ballets, in using folk lore, are pursuing not mere quotations from the wealth of folk dances but a new artistic re-creation on the basis of all classical experience (classical not only in the sense of classical school, but all that has been best in ballet). A so far unsurpassed peak has been reached in this respect by Chabukiani in *Heart of the Hills*. A very good example of folk dance as theme for a *pas d'action* is the serfs' dance from *Katerina* by Lavrovsky (despair expressed through movements of the Russian dance), and the Basque dance from *Flame of Paris*. Such ballets, the concerts of the Folk Dance Ensemble, and numerous folk dance festivals have acquainted the spectator with many more national dances than he knew from the old ballets.

At present Moiseyev is experimenting with a new form of show—a more theatrical one, based on a scenario, with some, though not too elaborate subject. He has already achieved something in this direction with his programme *Red Navy Suite*, the result of four months spent by the Ensemble in the Navy. Centred around a simple theme, "One Day in the life of a Ship", the suite consists of sailors' dances based on versions of the Russian dance.

Moiseyev has a flair for turning every and any movement into a dance. He overdid this in such an early work as *Football Player* where sometimes a dance was merely a replica of movements belonging to the sport. Now his talent has matured and he always tries to transfigure movements and give them a degree of artistry.

He has retained throughout his great gift of attaining colossal theatrical effect with simple means. This comes from his experience with folk dances, often based on two or three movements. His own compositions

"ARKAN," (LASSO), A GUTZUL DANCE FROM THE CARPATHIANS

"DIASMALI," AN AZERBEIJAN DANCE FOR WOMEN

in folk idiom, such as the Bielorussian *Bulba* composed of national movements true to folk lore yet non-existent, breathe of this unique gift. Hardly anyone knows now that *Bulba* is not an authentic Bielorussian dance. It was taken from the people and returned to them. The Bielorussian people were so poor and undeveloped before the Revolution that they had practically no living dances of their own. When it is analysed, *Bulba* consists of only two movements, polka and *chassé*, but the constant change of dance pattern, the unerring tempo in which the dance is being done by girls of the Ensemble's *corps de ballet* with such verve and joy of life, make the dance look like an intricate combination of steps. The theme of *Bulba* (potato in Bielorussian) is the planting and picking of potatoes.

Moiseyev has several such re-creations of folk dances. One cannot say that *every* movement of a folk dance arranged by him actually exists in the original dance ; the movement is developed, given a scenic pattern, continuously improved upon. The quality of movement has also been perfected—the jumps are higher because they are performed by excellently trained professionals, the *par terre* steps are danced with infinite swiftness and grace.

While both classical and character *barre* and centre exercises are accepted and used in the daily work of the company, it derives its technique from daily practice of folk dances, because the sources of character *barre* and folk dance have become too far removed. Moiseyev, as a matter of fact, has a system of exercises developed by himself on the basis of steps met in the various national dances of the Soviet Union which the Ensemble has to dance. His own lesson, when he finds time to give it, is very much different from an ordinary character or classical class.

He is now continuing to seek a new, theatrical medium for presenting folk dances. His *Ukranian Suite* is a step in this direction though it suffers from a certain excess of pantomime. Moiseyev is always at his best in comic, humorous, satirical sketches. For the next season he is preparing a new programme with a simple "book" based on a modern theme—a May 1st celebration in the streets of Moscow. Contemporary subjects—this is what Soviet Ballet is working at now. As always, before a big canvas is to be painted, there will be numerous smaller sketches and experiments. Igor Moiseyev is one of those unafraid of experimenting, which is a safeguard on the road to success.

He is at the same time thinking of returning to composing a full-length ballet, and is at present engaged in writing, in collaboration with Nicolai Volkov, the book of a ballet, *Spartak*, which may be produced at the Kirov Theatre in Leningrad next season.

THE METROPOLITAN BALLET

THE Metropolitan Ballet (whose first London season ran from June 2nd to June 19th at the Scala Theatre) is a young, enthusiastic group of dancers under a directorate whose aim it is to present new works and give opportunities to choreographers, designers and composers rather than rely on the standard war horses of a bygone repertoire. This ambition, which cannot fail to meet with the approval of all who love Ballet, is at the moment brought up somewhat short against two hard but undeniable facts ; that the English ballet public, particularly in the provinces where all but the resident company at Covent Garden must perforce spend most of their time, positively demand the inclusion of *Swan Lake Act II* and *Les Sylphides* or they do not consider they are seeing a ballet performance, and that choreographic talent is and always has been extremely rare. It will take a long time to build up such a repertoire as is visualised and the company has been further handicapped by various changes of management and constant switching around of dancers, so that in its present form it is only a few months' old.

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA IN " FANCIULLA DELLE ROSE "
otográph by Roger Wood

The repertoire is still, therefore, a very small one, and to come to the point at once, it contains at the moment only one ballet of exceptional merit : but that one is a beauty. John Taras's *Designs with Strings* has already been favourably reviewed in this magazine, but repeated showings only confirm one's belief that this is one of the finest ballets this country has seen in years. If within another two years the Metropolitan can produce three more works of equal merit it will have laid the best possible foundation for its future.

The one absolutely new ballet of the season was *Fanciulla delle Rose* by Frank Staff to music by Arensky and a décor by Guy Sheppard. The theme of a young girl's vision of the Seven Deadly Sins, each of whom in turn takes a rose from the wreath which she has come to lay at the feet of the Virgin's statue, enables Staff to sidetrack the choreographer's problem of developing a plot through dancing. The ballet turns itself into a series of male solos with a kind of obbligato of accompanying movement from the girl. When all have gone through their paces, they return to sprinkle the roses over the girl and she then places the naked wreath at the foot of the statue. But since the Seven Deadly Sins can only be abstractions I should have thought some simple way could have been found for them to replace the roses in the wreath so that she could offer it, blooming like her innocence, to the Virgin. The ballet would then have hung together as it does not do at the moment. Though the action is unconvincing, Staff has arranged his dances with an acute appreciation of male movement and a touch of acrobatics which is most welcome. Svetlana Beriosova is appealing as the Innocent and gracefully supple in all she is given to do, though the role remains nebulous. Guy Sheppard is for once less than inspired in a décor which sets columns across the front of the stage which, slender as they are, manage to obscure the dancers for everyone in the audience in turn. *Fanciulla delle Rose* cannot be considered an important offering but will serve its turn until Frank Staff is ready with the major work we all feel he has it in him to give.

Of the other ballets, *Pygmalion* and *Dances of Galanta* will doubtless be dropped as soon as they can be replaced and I hope the same will apply to *Spectre de la Rose* which is quite disastrous. The classical excerpts were also probably included only to swell the repertoire. They were less than distinguished except for Paul Gnatt's unorthodox Blue Bird which was worth going miles to see for the sake of his brilliant beats. Beriosova's Princess Florine was enchanting in its conception though she is not yet ready for this or the

Photograph by Roger Wood

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA AND DAVID ADAMS IN "FANCIULLA DELLE ROSE"

other classical roles which she is being given. She is a dancer of exceptional quality and a most lovable personality though I would be happier for her future if she could be kept in the classroom for another two years, when her present potentialities would almost certainly be completely fulfilled. The *Dances from "Prince Igor"* were performed with commendable enthusiasm and verve by everyone, though it would be nonsense to pretend that the resemblance between these and Fokine's Polovtsien warriors and maidens is even as much as coincidental. Staff's other ballet *The Lovers' Gallery* is a good idea poorly handled and the dancers are becoming increasingly broad in their treatment, which does not help.

Amongst the many promising young dancers David Adams stands out for a catlike softness allied to power which should make him a formidable contestant for classical honours in a few years. Meanwhile he must "grow a neck" and keep his shoulders down.

The Metropolitan Ballet is still only in process of developing a definite personality of its own, yet it is good to see a company who seem to dance for the joy of dancing rather than from a conscientious sense of duty. May they long keep this joy in their work.

After appearing in *"Pilgrim's Progress"* at Covent Garden the company is off to Sweden to dance for three weeks from August 8th at the Cirkus Theatre, Stockholm. John Taras has joined the company as dancer as well as choreographer, and it is very probable that Alexandre Kalioujny, who was seen here with Lifar's Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo, will also dance in Stockholm. After an autumn tour of the provinces Metropolitan Ballet will again be going abroad.

P. W. M.

CARNET DU BALLET

By ALAN STOREY

Les vrais paradis sont ceux qu'on a perdus.—Marcel Proust.

THE memoirs of ageing balletomanes, in common with those of gourmets and anglers, range imaginatively from the fantastic to the minor maladjustment of the truth. So each one of us, on returning to his distant past, would appear to assume a mantle of sorcery which permits wilful play with the dimensions ; magnifies the meagre trout ; expands the extravagant meal beyond all limits of human taste and endurance ; and, contemptuous of every restriction, arrests the dancer's flight at its nadir, or unfolds her arabesque through an eternity of time and space. We tolerate, even commend memory—that so uncertain quality which, we are told, removes us from the level of the beast—because it is the matrix of art and legend ; the fertile shrine of such ideals as shape our attitudes to the present and our resolves for the future. But it is also (a tendency which strengthens with age and the growing awareness of one's aesthetic sterility) an anodyne as blinding, as destructive to the present as Death, in that it develops within us a malady that feeds upon itself, inducing us to confuse for evermore dream and substance. Those so possessed may never return to the present, except perhaps as poor ghosts impelled to pour their sorrows into disregarding ears.

We can, at best, wish them ignorance of their condition ; for in that, at least, they may still cling to some semblance of happiness. Sir Osbert Sitwell's acute awareness of his disease is, however, boldly announced by the quotation from *Malfi* which precedes *Great Morning** : "Echo, I will not talk with thee for thou art a dead thing." But, curiously, the irony proceeds no further ; the bitterness, the hurt reproaches of the sentimentalist, are nowhere detectable in Sir Osbert's delightful reconstruction of the past. On the contrary, the warmth of a Golden Age lingers on in his veins ; his pen still moves with benign majesty through a prose whose formal intricacies resemble the processional in a Petipa ballet—gracefully assured, a trifle pompous perhaps in its flourishes, but always providing the perfect setting for the delights which follow. Even the title, *Great Morning*, evokes the enchantment of a new, exciting day—a day of initiation, a coming-of-age. It is true that the story, or rather its setting, is old by now ; as familiar to the present generation as the legend of Robin Hood. Fokine, Nijinsky, Karsavina and Pavlova are no more to them than exotic names, to be fingered with impatient reverence in a rosary beginning : Camargo, Sallé, Taglioni, Grisi . . . What else could they be ? Their ballets are, with few exceptions, lifeless facts immured in Mr. Beaumont's pages or, more sadly, in decaying programmes, surrounded by the proclamations of *couturières*, *parfumeurs*, and *restaurateurs*, whose demoded toys seem now to emphasise the ephemerality of a *Carnaval*, the transience of *Le Dieu Bleu*.

The passing of dancers and their ballets is, however, to be expected. We do not mourn the mere fact of death and oblivion in remembering the splendours of Diaghilev's first seasons, but something far deeper and more personal ; no less than that almost unbearable ecstasy which springs only from first experiences ; and which, though it can never be possessed, shatters the walls of complacency around us and drives us, unwilling Sauls, from Tarsus. So far as the young Osbert is concerned the analogy is undoubtedly relevant. Hitherto the process of living has been for him, if not exactly painful, then little more than bearable. Overshadowed by the bewildering personality of his father ; stifled by the unimaginative routines of school and army life ; possibly—and here I read between the lines—vaguely resentful of the awakening talents of his brother and sister, conscious of his own apparent lack of vocation, the Diaghilev Ballet lifted the curtain on to an unimagined world, a world peopled with disturbing, personal symbols. He was, in his own words, ". . . aware that for the first time I had been given the opportunity of seeing presented upon the stage a work of art, imbued with originality and with the spirit of its own day . . . a performance in which every gesture, every line, every tone, meant something ; a work of art that could not have existed before, and would cease to be given in its perfection, within the brief season of the dancers' finest span. Because, for the first time, I was able to watch, in addition, the dancing of great artists, Karsavina and Adolf Bolm, who was superb in his part. Karsavina, so beautiful to-day, was then at the height of beauty and of her career, the greatest female dancer that Europe had seen for a century . . . The long, plangent ripple of the harpstrings as the Firebird entered appeared to offer to one some hidden meaning, just as the gathering of ogres and sinister satellites round the crouching, wasp-like figure of the baleful master, Koscheii (played that night by the great Cecchetti), seemed to bear some relation to life as I knew it . . .

**Great Morning.* Being the third volume of *Left-hand, Right-hand :* Macmillan & Co.

The gates of life could be opened, if one possessed the key (what could I do ?), and the powers of evil, chaotic and uncreated, ill-proportioned and anomalous, could be put to flight by one feather plucked from that rare bird . . . Now I knew where I stood. I would be, for so long as I lived, on the side of the arts. . . . I would support the artist in every controversy, on every occasion. . . . And, in my bones I felt that this opportunity would most frequently come my way. . . . "

A work of art imbued with the spirit of its own time that could not have existed before. There, I imagine, is the germ of the matter ; the explanation of the legends and the reason why it is no longer possible to recapture or, for the partisans of today, to imagine the transcendent glories of those distant times. For though a Fonteyn or a Markova may, at certain moments, seize our hearts and set our spines a-quiver ; though they may dance like the angels or the spheres in their courses, yet they cannot remove us from the rim into the hub of time, into that still centre where creator and beholder are joined and become one ; and where, by means of intense self-identification, a young Osbert becomes, in all wonder, a young Ivan holding the Firebird's ransom in his hand—a feather that will turn eventually into a pen destined to translate the very essence of the ballet, its light, its colour and its rhythm into English Letters.

Ballet is now too much part and parcel of our lives for it to retain its essential magic. It has become almost a necessity ; the near equivalent of football and greyhound racing for the superior typist and the minor executive. We go now to cheer our favourites out of all proportion to their talents and greet visiting artists with indifference, fearful lest applause for *them* be misconstrued as disloyalty to the home team.

But in the years uncovered by Sir Osbert—the years of Caruso, Destinn and Chaliapin—the ballet " that blooms for a year, it seems, every century, was enjoying one of its culminations." For once, choreography, dancing, inspiration and presentation fused into a single perfection, into a moment of truth. " It becomes inevitable," Sir Osbert writes, " when writing of it at this time, that the word *genius* should recur with frequency, almost with monotony in these few pages, for no other word can describe the quality of the chief dancers or the influences at work. . . ." Fired by the last spark of Romanticism and its own revolutionary fervour, it carried with it into the theatre what can only be described as a religious atmosphere. And like all new religions it could be approached only by the path of unknowing. Looking back, disregarding the *succès d'estime* and the snobbery, that is how it strikes one most : a series of sophisticated audiences, for whom ballet hitherto meant nothing except possibly white skirts and pink shoes, reduced entirely to themselves, forgetful of everything but the consummation before them . . . And outside, in the shops, the visible manifestation of this new gospel—the fol-de-rols and fashions *à la Scheherazade, à la Petrouchka*. . . .

But who wishes to hear the story all over again ? Who really believes that it is true and not just another conspiracy of old men designed to keep the young in their places ? Perhaps, for all I know, another young Osbert opened his eyes with Markova's Aurora . . . Perhaps T. S. Eliot is correct in suggesting: "That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret, pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened." But in another place he has also written : " There is a time for the evening under starlight, a time for the evening under lamplight (The evening with the photograph album)." I leave the starlight to others, content now to have the pages turned by this enchanting companion.

Ballet and Football —An Analogy

The Editor,
Ballet Today.

Dear Madam,

I have noticed that the pages of your periodical contain quite often provocative articles which are the more welcome and stimulating in that they relate to ballet—an art form whose literature is clogged with sentimental rubbish.

Consequently I thought you might be interested to hear—and that your readers might be interested too—that I, in common with several other people I know, am tending to find in the contemplation of football much that we have always sought—and sometimes found—in performances of ballet.

I refer mainly to a sense of spiritual stimulation and exaltation peculiar to the contemplation of, and intellectual participation in, dancing.

During the past few years I have found that the dance has become more and more obscured by the literary and psychological themes used by choreographers—even debased to the position of a vehicle for personal paranoia on occasion. Consequently I have attended performances less and less, as I consider it pointless to go to theatrical performances merely to be annoyed. In "performances" of football, however, I find none of this annoyance and sense of frustration at the spectacle of the misuse of an art form.

That football should be compared with ballet may em strange to many—it certainly would to many llowers of football—but I maintain, as does one of r eminent dance critics, that football, with its origins a religious festival, is the biggest and most popular nce form in Britain.

The person who knows nothing of football and never ends matches probably considers it as the pointless shing about in the mud of twenty-two men watched frantic, fantastically decorated spectators. The citement, stimulus and partisanship I must allow, t they do not account entirely for the huge following hich football has. There are moments when the most ildly vociferous supporter is silent in admiration a beautiful combined movement, as when a line of rwards moves in an intricate pattern, the ball moving tween them, and this is caused as often by his team's pponents as by his "home" team. This football pporter, who knows nothing of the literature of llet or the high-flown nonsense of bar talk, is never-eless moved by the movement of human bodies in ace, by the delicate abstract patterns they make, ngly and in interaction with each other—and that is ncing, surely.

I, who have been like so many through the many ages of balletomania, find that these moments of ised beauty are to be found more frequently at the otball stadium than Covent Garden. This is the ult of ballet in allowing itself to be dominated by eople who do not appreciate dancing, and I believe it ill not always be so: the dance will emerge again nspoiled by its debauchery by literature, psychology nd all the other anti-dance bedfellows it has been rced to entertain.

Till that happens, however, I shall continue to find, t least in some small measure, the exaltation I seek at ne football stadium; and I recommend anyone else vho finds himself disconcerted by a lack of interest n ballet performances to join me.

Yours faithfully,

FRANCIS SAUNDERS.

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The Red Shoes

I fear that this film will be a disappointment to ballet lovers and film goers alike. It is very long, very slow and a lot of it is very, very boring. Also it makes the mistake of taking itself far too seriously ; there is no justification, for example, for the tragic ending since Vicky and Julian could far more logically have rushed into each other's arms for the traditional fade-out. In essence it is the usual career-or-love theme, and Victoria Page has to choose between being the greatest ballerina in the world or being the wife of a young composer on the brink of success. There is apparently no such alternative as joining another company, these being but piffle before the wind in comparison with the Lermontov Ballet, so Vicky decides that on the whole the only thing to do is not to be either a ballerina or the wife of a famous composer but just a corpse.

It is the much-heralded *Red Shoes* ballet which is the biggest disappointment. Choreographically it is not especially interesting, the best moment being a straight pinch from *The Wanderer*, but the bad mistake comes in starting it as a ballet in a theatre and then ignoring the confines of space and wafting it through labyinthine streets and corridors with slow-motion leaps through clouds and other tricks made possible by the film. The camera work is admittedly ingenious, particularly the episode of the flapping newspaper which turns into Robert Helpmann and back again, but this has nothing to do with a stage performance and when the curtain falls we feel cheated. The way this ballet has been filmed does show that film ballet is a possibility but the opportunities have here only been grasped, not retained.

Anton Walbrook is an accomplished actor who makes a full-sized figure of Lermontov but cannot give him the necessary additional stature which would convince us of a genius capable of enforcing the sacrifice of human desires for the cause of his Ballet. Instead it is Leonide Massine playing the choreographer to the Lermontov Ballet who radiates greatness in spite of some over-grimacing.

Moira Shearer easily holds her own in a cast of seasoned actors and is well up to the dancing requirements though her personality does not yet suggest a prima ballerina.

The back stage atmosphere is well caught and more of it would have been welcome. Helpmann's little groan when someone wishes him luck just before the curtain rises on the new ballet, is a masterpiece in its way. This and Madame Rambert's five seconds' appearance as Madame Rambert are the two most convincing things in the film. P. W. M.

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